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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/974,594	10/09/2001	Norman Ken Ouchi		7077

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EXAMINER

ALAM, UZMA

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

2157

DATE MAILED: 01/13/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/974,594

Applicant(s)

OUCHI, NORMAN KEN

Examiner

Uzma Alam

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 09 October 2001.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☒ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 09 October 2001 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

This action is responsive to the application filed on October 9, 2001. Claims 1-20 are pending. Claims 1-20 represent means for tailoring workflow steps.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 1-9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Regarding claims 1 and 5, it is not entirely clear whether the claim is a method or an apparatus/system. It seems like a system claim which is claiming steps for a method.

As per claim 1, line 4, there is no antecedent basis for "the file attachment means"

Claim 1 recites the limitation "the file attachment means" in line 4. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim.

Claim 1 recites the limitation "the workflow step" in line 5. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim.

Claim 1 recites the limitation "the classification information" in lines 6-7. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim.

Claims 1-9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being incomplete for omitting essential elements, such omission amounting to a gap between the elements. See MPEP

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§ 2172.01. The omitted elements are: the steps in a workflow route. It is unclear what the claimed steps of the workflow route are and function they are performing.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

Claims 1-9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Gondo et al. US Patent Publication No. 2003/0079186.

Gondo teaches the invention as claimed including an information collecting/providing system which classifies information and manages it (see abstract).

As per claim 1, Gondo teaches a tailored, classified file attachment screen provided to a user by a server connected to a network wherein the tailored, classified file attachment screen is associated with a step in a workflow route such that the classification of the file to be attached and the configuration of the file attachment means for the tailored, classified file attachment screen are provided by the workflow step and, using the file attachment means, the user can attach a file that is then sent with the classification information to the server (Gondo discloses a information management system in which information is classified and then emailed in the form of an attachment or downloaded and modified and sent back to the server; paragraphs 0054-

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0055; 0080-0081; 0084; 0090-0091; 0101; 0105; 0116; 0123).

As per claim 2, Gondo teaches the tailored, classified file attachment screen of claim 1 wherein the screen is a Web page and the server is a Web server (0081, 0086, 0100).

As per claim 3, Gondo teaches the tailored, classified file attachment screen of claim 1 wherein the file attachment means can attach files with a parent-child relationship (0065).

As per claim 4, Gondo teaches the tailored, classified file attachment screen claim 1 wherein the file classification includes a meta-name and an iteration indicator (Gondo discloses a classification system in which the user can tell how often the file has been modified; 0061-0063).

As per claim 5, Gondo teaches a tailored, classified file download screen provided to a user by a server connected to a network wherein the tailored, classified file download screen is associated with a step in a workflow route such that the classification of the file to be downloaded and the configuration of the file download means for the tailored, classified file download screen are provided by the workflow step, enabling the user to download the file from the server (Gondo discloses a information management system in which information is classified and then emailed in the form of an attachment or downloaded and modified and sent back to the server; paragraphs 0054-0055; 0080-0081; 0084; 0090-0091; 0101; 0105; 0116; 0123).

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As per claim 6, Gondo teaches he tailored, classified file download screen of claim 5 wherein the screen is a Web page and the server is a Web server (0081, 0086, 0100).

As per claim 7, Gondo teaches the tailored, classified file download screen of claim 5 wherein the download means can download files with a parent-child relationship (0065).

As per claim 8, Gondo teaches the tailored, classified file download screen of claim 5 wherein the user can use the file classification to select files for downloading (paragraph 0091).

As per claim 9, Gondo teaches he tailored, classified file download screen of claim 5 associated with a workflow route step with a conditional branch wherein the user can indicate the branch choice and send the choice to the server (Gondoc discloses a method for deciding which part of the tree is going to be searched; paragraphs 0091; 0121-0125).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 10-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gondo et al. US Patent Publication No. 2003/0079186 in view of Bengston US Patent No. 6,728,947.

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Bengston teaches the invention as claimed including a workflow system for communicated files to specify process steps (see abstract).

As per claim 10, Gondo teaches a system connected to a network wherein the file based system contains a classification table and a route, a sequence of steps, and for a step requiring a file attachment, the step is associated with a tailored, classified file attachment screen and for a step requiring a file download, the step is associated with a tailored, classified file download screen (Gondo discloses a information management system in which information is classified and then emailed in the form of an attachment or downloaded and modified and sent back to the server; paragraphs 0054-0055; 0080-0081; 0084; 0090-0091; 0101; 0105; 0116; 0123). Gondo does not teach a file based workflow system. Bengston teaches a file based workflow system. See column 5, lines 1-19; column 6, lines 4-25). It would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine a file based workflow system of Bengston with a information/collection management system of Gondo. A person of ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to do this to organize all the data of the processes and updates on each step of the process of the workflow.

As per claim 11, Gondo teaches the file based workflow system of claim 10 wherein the file classification is related to a file sever name using the classification table (paragraph 0055).

As per claim 12, Gondo teaches the file based workflow system of claim 10 and a file server wherein an attached file from a user of a tailored, classified file attachment screen is

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received; assigned a file name; the file name, the file given name and classification information are entered into the classification table; and the file is stored in the file server using the file name (paragraphs 0055, 0061-0063;0091).

As per claim 13, Gondo teaches the file based workflow system of claim 10 and a file server wherein a file to be downloaded by a user of a tailored, classified file download screen is retrieved by using the file classification information from the associated step and the classification table to derive the file name and the file name is used to retrieve the file from the file sever so that it may be sent to the user when requested for downloading using the tailored, classified file download screen (Gondo discloses a information management system in which information is classified and then emailed in the form of an attachment or downloaded and modified and sent back to the server; paragraphs 0054-0055; 0061-0063; 0080-0081; 0084; 0090-0091; 0101; 0105; 0116; 0123).

As per claim 14, Gondo teaches the file based workflow system of claim 10 wherein the classification table represents the parent-child relationship of a file to another file (paragraph 0065).

As per claim 15, Gondo teaches the file based workflow system of claim 10 wherein a step in the route with a conditional branch is associated with a tailored, classified file download screen and the user indicated choice is received and the choice is applied to the step with a

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conditional branch (Gondoc discloses a method for deciding which part of the tree is going to be searched; paragraphs 0091; 0121-0125).

As per claim 16, Gondo teaches the file based workflow system of claim 10 wherein the iteration field in the classification table is used to relate the files used in an iteration of a route with an iterative loop and to distinguish these files from files used in other iterations (Gondo discloses a classification system in which the user can tell how often the file has been modified; 0061-0063).

As per claim 17, Gondo teaches the file based workflow system of claim 10 wherein the iteration field in the classification table is used to relate a file generated by a process with the input files used by the process (paragraphs 0061-0063).

As per claim 18, Gondo teaches the file based workflow system of claim 10 wherein the iteration field in the classification table is used to relate the files used in an instance of a route and to distinguish these files from files used in other instances of the route (Gondoc discloses a method for deciding which part of the tree is going to be searched and distinguishing one parent-child pair from another; paragraphs 0061-0063; 0070; 0091; 0121-0125).

As per claim 19, Gondo teaches the file based workflow system of claim 10 wherein the route forks into two parallel sub-routes consisting of a first sub-route with a step to download a first file and a second sub-route with a step to download a second file (paragraph 0070-0071;

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0089)

As per claim 20, Gondo teaches the file based workflow system of claim 10 wherein the meta-name field in the classification table is used to relate the files with similar functional content for selection for downloading from the file server (paragraphs 0070; 0080-0081; 0090;0106).

Conclusion

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Ghoneimy et al. US Publication No. 2004/0078373.

Bowman-Amuah US Patent No. 6,550,057.

Haverstock US Patent No. 6,449,640.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Uzma Alam whose telephone number is (571) 272-3995. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Tuesday 11:30am-8pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Ario Etienne can be reached on (571) 272-4001. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

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